

## ON - THE - FIRING - LINE

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF RICHMOND'S WHOLESALE, MANUFACTURERS AND COMMERCIAL TRAVELERS



## THE BUSINESS COLUMN

EDITED BY MANSFIELD F. HOUSE (Continued)

In this column, which appears every Sunday, Wednesday and Friday, will appear news and short articles of special interest to merchants, their salespeople and business men and women in general.

## BUSIEST DRUG STORE HANDLES ONLY DRUGS

The Firemen's drug store, at Broad and Market streets, Newark, N. J., is given credit by pharmacists throughout the United States as being the busiest establishment of its kind in the country, and is visited from time to time by the knights of the mortar and pestle to learn just how to gain business and hold it.

Its owner is W. J. Beldon, aged about forty-five, a quiet and unassuming man, who was told by his friends a few years ago that he was plain downright crazy "when he quit his little store, where he was making a good living, to embark in business in the center of town."

What impresses the visitor to the store is the absolute absence of any of the department store atmosphere that so often is found in the pharmacy of today. It is a drug store, only that, and nothing more. Beldon sells drugs and the usual accessories and lets the other stuff go.

A marvel of efficient arrangement where the public can be served quickly and efficiently is thus provided, and the Firemen's drug store is inspected as a model by druggists from all over the country when they get near or in New York. They all say it is worth the trip to Skeeter Land.

Beldon has nothing to say about how he did it. He advertises in the papers of Newark and Elizabeth and lets it go at that, saying he advertises drugs but not himself. So the druggists who have gone over the place with a critical eye have reached some conclusions on how a small drug store has attained this pre-eminence. These are:

First. Picking a location that assured plenty of traffic and having the nerve to abide by one's own judgment.

Second. Possessing the right kind of an eye to see what the public wants and having it ready for them when they call.

Third. Arranging every department so the busy customer need not wait.

Fourth. Hiring a large enough sales force to handle trade with speed.

Fifth. Telling the public by advertising what is to be had and thus securing quick turnovers.

GROCERS PROPOSE LAWS TO HELP CUT H. C. L.

As a means of taking constructive action toward reducing the high cost of living the National Retail Grocers' Association, through its secretary, Leon M. Hattenbach, of Denver, Col., is urging State secretaries to advocate the passage of four federal laws as follows:

First. That a limited embargo be placed upon exports of all essentials, permitting only the surplus to be exported after ascertaining the available supply and estimating the requirements necessary for home consumption.

Second. That resales between members of the same group of distributors be prohibited.

Third. That all trading on all boards of trade and exchanges be prohibited to prevent "interference" for actual delivery.

Fourth. That only those actually engaged in the production or distribution of foodstuffs be permitted to handle foodstuffs for other necessities, both raw materials

and finished products, be permitted to deal in the same.

## MOTHERS SHOP WHILE CHILDREN READ BOOKS

Attracting the book trade of both adults and children is the Children's Book Corner in the Lord & Taylor Book Shop, New York. Tucked away in a conspicuous spot at one end of the well-stocked bookshop for adults is a special corner, enclosed by high counters that insure little people complete privacy and quiet when they pore intently over Mother Goose rhymes. This secluded little room, walled by bookshelves, is furnished with the most diminutive chairs and tables, imaginable just high enough for little boys and girls.

For this little corner is the children's own—a department devoted exclusively to literature for little people. In this quiet spot children are invited to come and read—whether mother buys the books or not.

In other words, to quote Miss Ennis, the brown-eyed, sympathetic woman, who takes charge of the Children's Book Corner: "This is a corner where children may come and amuse themselves while mother does her shopping upstairs."

Miss Ennis realizes, of course, that on the whole children are not strictly the immediate buyers of children's books. Rather, adults who purchase the majority of children's books, have to be sold first. On the other hand, this shop realizes that children play a considerable part in the selection of their reading, and this corner provides the quiet spot in which to do it.

Most mothers find it quite a delightful help to leave their children in such safe, capable hands while they do their shopping alone upstairs. Needless to say, the children prefer to wait here among the picture books, too. Nothing makes a little boy or girl more fretful and impatient than to be hurried around dress departments or millinery sections, and here hurriedly interested in fairy tales or pirate adventures—write its name.

Another attractive feature of this Children's Book Corner is the little green leather-covered guest book devoted exclusively to the little visitors to the corner. Nothing delights a child more than to be asked to write its name. Even among the picture books, too. Nothing makes a little boy or girl more fretful and impatient than to be hurried around dress departments or millinery sections, and here hurriedly interested in fairy tales or pirate adventures—write its name.

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in price, if it could be had, would be an advantage to all legitimate interests.

## Factors in Cotton Situation

It would be difficult to say which factor was the most potent in the well-sustained rise in cotton quotations during the past week. The untoward weather over a large part of the growing district was one of the factors whose influence was very marked. So, also, was the prospect of early normal resumption of international trade, forecast by the ratification of the Peace Treaty by European nations to give it validity. On the other hand, the latest figures showing consumption of cotton in domestic mills for September were not very cheering. Although the amount was about 1,400 bales more than in September, 1918, it was less by about 11,000 bales than in August of this year. The exports, also, were 130,000 bales less to date than at this period last year. But, whatever optimism was shown in the Cotton Exchanges it was much less than what was apparent in the goods markets. Manufacturers, jobbers and exporters seem to have come to the conclusion that cotton prices, while they will probably show some wide fluctuations, are bound for the year to be on a relatively high level, and they are proceeding on that assumption.

Their prices, showing more than a fair margin for fluctuation in the cost of the raw material, Printcloths and other gray goods have been showing an upward tendency for goods to be delivered as far ahead as late next spring, and other buyers have caught the same impulse. The price of denim, for example, was made on Thursday by the biggest factor in the trade, with a basis of 27-1-2 cents a yard on 2.20 goods, a fair indication of what is going on in knit goods, as distinguished from woven, there continues the assertion that the supply is hardly likely to be sufficient to meet the demand.

Conditions in Wool and Woollens. Little change is noticeable in the wool situation from week to week. The minor auction sales abroad continue to show the price firmness especially for the better grades, which marked the recent larger ones in London. Regarding the latter, it is reported that the takings for American wools were 10,000 bales. Changes of date have been made for remaining sales of colonial wools in London up to the end of the year. The first of them will begin on the 27th instant and continue to November 4, and the second will start in December. The next series of sales at auction of government-owned wools in this country will begin in Boston on November 10. The goods market remains devoid of any very marked features, beyond the fact that the mills are seeing their way clear to provide larger supplies of fabrics than were at first indicated. The call has been for the lightest weight cloths and for worsteds rather than for woollens. The garment manufacturers seem to favor the higher priced fabrics. What difference there is in price between these and the other kinds is not so material just now when labor costs of manufacturing garments are taken into account and it is easier to secure higher prices for clothing that looks and feels high class. Some minor openings of spring lines have taken place, but the big ones are due for the present week.

ing their desire to improve the personnel of the selling staff. This they are endeavoring to do by attracting to the stores a type of girl and woman that has never known the advantages of sales work in stores, including the number of special privileges and the numerous promotions to high posts which this kind of employment affords.

There are at least two important ways the executives of the big stores are trying to get new workers of the kind they want as well as to retain those who have given satisfaction to the shops and their customers. One of these is to offer, in addition to the various privileges which store positions automatically give, special prizes and bonuses. The other is to show the advantages of the employment through carefully drawn announcements that are a far cry from the brief, formed "help wanted" advertisements of only a few years ago. Recent advertisements of the best-known stores in the country, illustrating the latter method very clearly, here there is a call for "experienced saleswomen for our millinery and ready-to-wear departments," nor is there any brusque request of the applicant to "apply to the superintendent on the —th floor." Instead the advertisements in question are of the "educational" type.

As to the bonus and commission system of holding satisfactory employees and getting new ones, one big store works this way: A bonus of \$10 is offered to present employees for each new customer brought in by them who stays six months. To the present commission system of paying 2 per cent on all sales exceeding the specified monthly quotas there has been added the plan of paying a commission of one-half of 1 per cent on all sales up to that amount specified as the quota which must be sold by an employee in order fully to earn the salary paid to him or her.

According to an executive of the store operating the plans just outlined, both have taken very well with the employees. Making the \$10 bonus contingent on the new workers staying six months leads the employees who bring them in to take a personal interest in seeing that they get along well enough to last through the specified period. By the time the six months are up, it is figured by both the store executives and the older workers the new employees will be so enamored of the work and its possibilities for promotion to bigger and better positions that they will stick indefinitely.

In encouraging the new worker the offering of one-half of 1 per cent on all sales up to the quota point plays just as large a part as it does in keeping in a cheerful frame of mind the employees older in point of service, who, for any reason, may have failed to earn the larger commission by exceeding their sales quotas. Sometimes the quotas are not reached. This frequently happens through no fault of the employee.

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such as, when too warm weather holds back the sale of fall ready-to-wear garments and furs, or when continued cold weather sets back sales of spring merchandise. In cases of this kind, the "old" employees are encouraged to stick because they know they are going to get something besides their salaries in spite of the vagaries of the weather man or other trade-deterrent factors. The new workers are likewise encouraged, for they know that they, too, will get returns larger than their actual salaries while they are learning the business to a point where they can exceed their quotas and earn the larger commission paid on excess sales.

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HOME INSTITUTIONS FIRST  
**VIRGINIA FIRE AND MARINE**  
Insurance Co. of Richmond, Va.  
(Incorporated 1832)

Assets, January 1, 1919.....\$2,445,889.22  
Net Surplus.....956,350.23  
Surplus to Policyholders.....1,206,350.28

Wm. H. Palmer, Pres.; E. B. Addison, V.-Pres.; B. C. Lewis, Jr., Secy.  
J. C. Watson, Treas.; J. M. Leake, General Agent.

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